

POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS BULLETIN

THE CLINICAL CENTER

Medical Administrative Series

M89-4 (rev.)

21 January 2000

MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

SUBJECT: Guide Dogs

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This issuance sets forth the policy of the Medical Executive Committee regarding the presence of service animals in the Clinical Center. The policy was initially approved by the Medical Board on 21 November 1989. The policy was reviewed by the Medical Executive Committee on 18 January and approved with changes.
2. Material Superseded: MAS No. 89-4 (rev.), dated 20 May 1997
3. Filing Instructions: "Other" Section

Remove: No. 89-4 (rev.), dated 20 May 1997

Insert: No. M89-4 (rev.), dated 21 January 2000

DISTRIBUTION

Physicians, Dentists and Other Practitioners Participating in
Patient Care
Institute Veterinarians

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SUBJECT: Guide Dogs

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines regarding the use of guide dogs by patients within the Clinical Center. The term "guide dog" is used generically in this policy statement to include any service animal trained to assist blind, hearing impaired, or otherwise physically handicapped individuals.

POLICY

Blind or otherwise handicapped patients are permitted to use guide dogs in all situations except where it can be clearly shown that the presence or use of the guide dog would pose a significant health risk or where the dog's behavior is disruptive.

CONSIDERATIONS AND RELATED ISSUES

Hospitals may not establish a policy that, in general, prohibits the use of auxiliary aids by handicapped individuals. Various types of specially trained dogs help handicapped persons to maintain independence in their activities of daily living. Any refusal to admit a visually impaired or otherwise handicapped person because of his/her need to use a guide dog is, in effect, prohibiting the use of an auxiliary aid.

PROCEDURES

A. Patients

1. All patients who are to be accompanied by guide dogs are to be notified by the respective Institute prior to arrival that they will need to provide the following pertaining to their animal:
 - a. A health certificate dated within the last twelve months, showing evidence of negative tests for ecto- and endoparasites.
 - b. Evidence of current vaccinations against the following:

Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Bordetella bronchiseptica, Parainfluenza, Rabies.
 - c. A statement that the animal has tested negative for heartworms and is currently receiving preventive heartworm medication.
2. Authorization for inpatients to be accompanied by guide dogs will be made by the appropriate Institute personnel in conjunction with the unit/clinic head nurse, subject to final approval by the Institute Clinical Director.
3. Patients will also be notified that during their stay/appointment(s) at the Clinical Center, they are responsible for the care of their animal (e.g., feeding, grooming, walking, etc.).
4. One week before the patient's appointment/admission, the Clinical Center veterinarian will be notified by the admitting Institute that a patient will arrive with a guide dog. Upon arrival of that patient, the Institute will again notify the CC veterinarian and request an immediate examination of the dog for any overt signs of illness. The veterinarian will request the health certificate and the other documentation listed above at that time. Patients who have frequent follow-up visits must have their dogs examined weekly or, if returning less often than weekly,

at the time of each appointment. Dogs are to be walked only in designated areas and must be kept on a leash.

The health certificate and other documents shall be maintained by the CC veterinarian.

Stainless steel bowls for food and water shall be provided by the Institute.

5. One week before all inpatient admissions, the admitting institute should also notify housekeeping, nutrition, and the campus police that a guide dog will be in residence. A sign stating "Guide Dog in Residence" should be posted outside the patient's room.
6. If the CC veterinarian determines that it would be inappropriate for the dog to remain in the facility or if housing the dog on the unit becomes problematic, the admitting Institute will make arrangements for the dog to be boarded in a facility off the NIH campus.
7. If the patient becomes unable to care for the dog (including walking, feeding, grooming, etc.), the Institute will provide personnel to perform these tasks. However, if a patient is unable to care for the dog for a protracted period, the Institute will arrange to have the dog boarded, with the costs of boarding being the responsibility of the owner.

B. Visitors

Guide dogs belonging to visitors will be permitted in the public areas of the hospital. Guide dogs of visitors will not be permitted in patient care areas, i.e., clinic exam rooms or rooms on patient care units.